



*In Mission
for Others*

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

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August 25, 2015

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2
pm@pm.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister:

On behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), I am writing to you to ask that a public inquiry be convened concerning missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

July 9-12, 2015 the ELCIC gathered for a national convention in Edmonton, AB. The 248 voting delegates, who were representing 121,000 members and 533 congregations from across our church and our country, asked me to bring this matter to your attention.

According to the RCMP, between 1980 and 2012 there were 1,017 Aboriginal female victims of homicide in Canada which represents roughly 16% of all female homicides—far greater than their four percent representation in Canada's female population.¹

A public inquiry offers several opportunities to help address this tragedy. Documenting reasons that Indigenous women and girls are so much more vulnerable than the rest of the population is a first step toward identifying new ways of preventing violence. Racial, gender and cultural biases need to be brought to light in order for institutions, organizations and systems to find the will to reform policies, procedures and attitudes. The very act of convening an inquiry is an act of prevention, by drawing attention to dangers and raising awareness of existing resources for support.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has called for a public inquiry as one of its Calls to Action. We still have much to learn about the links between high rate of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls and the intergenerational legacy of residential schools. The conclusion of the TRC has left us all with a profound call to work for reconciliation.

¹ Source: CBC News, January 12, 2015

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/murdered-and-missing-aboriginal-women-deserve-inquiry-rights-group-says-1.2897707>

Attending a vigil for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls is to be surrounded by the deep pain, suffering and grief experienced by family members. One of the frustrations and fears is that the world has forgotten these beloved and inherently valuable human beings. A public inquiry would give voice to families of missing persons, and offer encouragement to those who are grieving. It is a sign that the country cares, that we will listen and that we want to find solutions to these tragedies.

For all these reasons, on behalf of the ELCIC, I ask you to convene a public inquiry concerning missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan C. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

The Rev. Susan C. Johnson
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

c.c. The Honourable Thomas Mulcair, The Leader of the Official Opposition
Justin Trudeau, MP, Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada
Elizabeth May, MP, Leader of the Green Party of Canada
Gilles Duceppe, Leader of the Bloc Québécois
The Honourable Bernard Valcourt, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
ELCIC National Church Council